



German
Historical
Institute
London

SEMINARS — AUTUMN 2016

25 October **MATHEW THOMSON (Warwick)**

The Closest Thing to a Religion? A Cultural History of the NHS

Britain's National Health Service has been described as the closest thing the British people have to a religion. But the cultural history of the institution has attracted surprisingly little attention. This lecture examines the cultural representation and meaning of the NHS since its foundation in 1948. Was the NHS really the closest thing to a religion? If so, how and when did this come about? And what are the implications of a cultural history of the NHS for how we think about the history of the NHS itself and for our understanding of post-war British history? Mathew Thomson is Professor of Modern British History at the University of Warwick. His most recent book, *Lost Freedom* (2013), examines concerns about children, space, and security in post-war Britain. He is currently working on a collaborative project on the cultural history of the NHS supported by the Wellcome Trust.

8 November **VANESSA HARDING (London)**

Wealth and Inequality in Early Modern London

The economic and demographic expansion of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century London increased the numbers of both super-rich and very poor, and also encouraged the emergence of a professional and commercial 'middling sort'. It is less easy to assess the size of the gap between rich and poor and whether and how much it was changing. This talk will investigate some of the sources for measuring and mapping wealth and inequality and will explore the changing relations between the rich and the comfortably-off and their poorer neighbours. Vanessa Harding is Professor of London History at Birkbeck, University of London. She has published widely on medieval and early modern London and is currently writing a book on seventeenth-century London with the life of a middling Londoner as its central thread.

22 November **HARALD FISCHER-TINÉ (Zurich)**

'Keep them pure, fit, and brotherly!': The Indian YMCA's 'Army Work' in the Great War (1914–1920)

The outbreak of the First World War was hailed by American YMCA secretaries working in India as presenting 'overwhelming opportunities' to enlarge the association's activities and boost its general popularity. This lecture takes stock of the wide spectrum of the Y's activities, and it addresses the question of the underlying objectives and wider impact of the Y's humanitarian 'war work' schemes. Harald Fischer-Tiné is Professor of Modern Global History at the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich (ETH Zürich). His research interests lie in the global and transnational history of South Asia and the British Empire. Among his recent books are *Shyamji Krishnavarma: Sanskrit, Sociology and Anti-Imperialism* (2014) and *Pidgin-Knowledge: Wissen und Kolonialismus* (2013).

6 December **FRANCES ANDREWS (St Andrews)**

Medieval Europe through Monastic Eyes

As global history takes centre stage, the interconnectedness of high medieval Europe might seem to be a given. Yet the widely held belief that medieval men and women lived their lives with little awareness of the world beyond their village and its fields persists. Nor do modern historians easily associate European interconnectedness with professional religious, the monks, nuns, and friars. This talk opens up an alternative view, exploring the many chapter meetings to which they travelled, how those meetings worked, and what they made of them, picturing medieval Europe through monastic eyes. Frances Andrews is Professor of Medieval History at the University of St Andrews. Her books include *The Early Humiliati* (1999), *The Other Friars* (2006), and several edited volumes, most recently, *Doubting Christianity: The Church and Doubt*, co-edited with Charlotte Methuen and Andrew Spicer (2016).

Please check for any last minute changes on 020 7309 2050 (tel.) or visit: <http://www.ghil.ac.uk>

Seminars are held at 5.30 p.m. in the Seminar Room of the German Historical Institute, 17 Bloomsbury Square, LONDON WC1A 2NJ.

Tea is available from 5.00 p.m. in the Common Room, and wine is served after the seminars.

Guided tours of the Library are available before each seminar at 4.30 p.m.